

THE QUEST FOR EQUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY: UJAMAA VILLAGES IN TANZANIA

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By mid-1974 at least 2,500,000 Tanzanians - a quarter of the peasant population - lived in Ujamaa Villages. The end of 1974 is expected to see at least 3,000,000 Ujamaa Village members in 7,500 villages; up to 2,000,000 members of 4,000 newly created non-Ujamaa villages; perhaps 1,500,000 residents of older non-Ujamaa villages. As recently as 1967 only a few thousand persons lived in communal production forerunners to Ujamaa villages and perhaps a million and a quarter in any type of peasant village so that the change both in villageization and in a shift toward at least partially communal production and distribution appears very rapid indeed. What does it mean? Are the villages - as sometimes asserted - a form of Stalinist collectivization or - as also alleged - a continuation of the long line of half thought out paternalistic colonial self help and settlement schemes? Are the national and peasant goals compatible? What are the probable effects on production and national mobilization?

For several reasons these questions are hard to answer. At a somewhat trivial level the statistics are old and late. More critically very different types of village are lumped under the rubric Ujamaa. At one extreme are ^{a few} (usually unsuccessful) rehabilitation schemes for more or less compulsorily settled urban and rural ~~destitutes, misfits,~~ ^{a handful of} and malcontents. At another are well established, high productivity, sophisticated labour point distribution system, dominantly joint production communities of self selected families for whom family plot production is distinctly secondary. Most fall somewhere in between with significant but not dominant joint production, some communal small scale investment and service efforts, fairly rudimentary joint product allocation, dominant family plot production, and a membership largely drawn by hopes of a better life in respect ^{of access} to public services and personal or communal production and consumption. Perhaps most important is the fact that the Ujamaa village effort is very much in progress both nationally and in the usually very new individual villages. Trends and problems can be isolated but no pattern and no unalterable dynamic has yet crystallized.

Ujamaa villages bear some resemblance to pre-independence settlement schemes and to the transformation settlement scheme programme worked up by the World Bank for independent Tanzania's first Five Year Plan.

However, these parallels must be treated with caution. They were intended to create a class of yeoman farmers who would spearhead a capitalist transformation of agriculture and were backed by ^{heavy} ~~very large~~ investment in support of a very small proportion of the rural population. Production, especially in the individually successful units, was oriented to export crops with high unit value set to basic feedstuffs and the degree of supervision and control exercised by scheme managers and other agricultural personnel was such as to reduce individual or group farmer initiative and participation in planning and decision taking to a low level. Admittedly President Nyerere's Presidential Inaugural Address which led to the 1964 Settlement Scheme programme sounded very like the later call for Ujamaa villages in Socialism and Rural Development, but the technical transformation wrought by World Bank advisers narrowed its coverage, increased its capital cost, accentuated the differentiation between the islands of settlement and the sea of ^{peasant} farmers, and substituted a highly technocratic paternalism for local initiative and control.

The Ujamaa village effort cannot be evaluated realistically outside the context of Tanzania's total developmental goals of transition to a socialist, ~~egalitarian~~ egalitarian, participatory, self-reliant society. Ujamaa is intended in the negative sense to prevent the rise of a rural kulak class linked with landlessness and a sharp rise in inequality. ~~It is~~ On the positive side it is intended to provide a means toward increasing rural productivity, mobilizing rural effort, and providing public services on a broad front; goals which are not feasible in the context of a highly scattered rural population and limited state financial and personnel resources. There is no goal that Ujamaa villages should remain poor, quite the contrary; Tanzanian opposition to ostentatious consumption arises neither from asceticism nor masochism but from a sober realization that luxury consumption cannot be a mass goal and must be egalitarian in a country with a per capita national output of about $\frac{1}{2}$ 50.

From the point of view of TANU and especially President Nyerere Ujamaa villages should provide access to higher levels of public services - particularly pure water, preventative and curative medicine (including environmental sanitation, child and mother care, health education), primary education, adult education centered on applied literacy, and improved traditional housing but also of public sector productive inputs including seed, fertilizer, insecticide, simple implements, new techniques and the personnel to assist in and demonstrate how to apply them. A dynamic toward higher output in large measure based on joint decisions and communal mobilization of labor for - e.g. - small scale irrigation, local roads, spring protection and shallow wells, reforestation, godown and

dairy buildings is seen as an essential element in Ujamaa Village development but one which will take time to achieve especially in the numerous cases of Ujamaa Villages grouping peasants from districts so far from self sufficiency in basic foods that famine relief has been needed in over half of the past forty years.

A majority of Ujamaa Village members have come from the poorer districts of Tanzania's poorer regions. Others are younger families who would have been landless or working on their senior family members' land in moderate to relatively high income districts. Their goals center on a greater access to public services and a hope that the villages will afford a way to higher production. Given the real resentment in at least some districts against the larger farmers and their infiltration of co-operative, Party, and governmental positions there is every reason to believe the attitude toward participation and egalitarianism is normally fairly positive. The vast majority of villagers came voluntarily because they hoped for a better life—largely in a material sense but also in terms of control over decisions affecting themselves. Those who were actively coerced (a quite small fraction) or blindly followed exhortations (perhaps a larger one) tended to leave villages fairly rapidly. Tanzania simply does not have the force to keep significant numbers of people in villages they wish to leave nor, indeed, to get them into them in the first place.

Selection of settlers has been largely self selection. This has posed problems because it has meant that the per cent of village members who are and are highest in the ecologically least favoured districts. In general these are the ones with frequent food deficits and very limited knowledge of effective routes to raising output, as well as the lowest level of public services. Thus Ujamaa Village results are not likely to look very dramatic in production terms especially if contrasted with larger farmers in districts more favoured by nature and better endowed with high unit value crops, relevant agricultural information, and a better infrastructure. On the other hand, the villagers have usually not been the poorest farmers (in either sense) in the districts and probably are those more willing to accept changes if these appear to offer a way forward and to work to achieve change if the initial results are at all promising. The danger is that the absence of relevant inputs and information will discourage, or the provision of irrelevant inputs and faulty information positively deter, the creation of a dynamic for progressive change on the production front.

Ujamaa villages have suffered from sporadic attempts to exert too much outside control and a general weakness in the provision of adequate outside support-especially on the farm management and production side. The ~~some~~ ^{extreme} cases of control such as clocking seasonal labour patterns critical to village member secondary income and adjacent area industrial crop harvesting and proposing that all Ujamaa Village annual plans be reviewed by the Economic Committee to the Cabinet have usually been resolved fairly rapidly and sensibly. The tendency for Regional Government and the Rural Development Section of the Prime Minister's Office to intervene, especially whenever an individual village decision appears unwise, is harder to resolve. There is a real contradiction between genuine village ~~and~~ decision taking and implementation and avoiding technical mistakes. The rural development experts (even more than the politicians and bureaucrats) are all too ready to demand the substitution of Platonic guardianship for ~~necessary~~ advice without seeing that this is inherently inconsistent with the nature of Ujamaa and almost certain to turn it into a pattern of dependence on permanent government support with very little productive dynamic. This is especially true given the lack of adequate technical information on the part of the "experts".

Provision of financial support is quite considerable. Adding up recurrent and capital budget funds directly benefitting Ujamaa Villages (primary and adult education, rural water, secondary roads, Regional Development fund, agricultural extension, rural applied skills, etc.) for 1973-4 gives a total of the order of Sh 300 million or Sh 100 plus per Ujamaa Village member. This is of the same order as the directly attributable national average-such items as higher education, defense, general administration, central hospitals are not allocable in this way-and rather more than that for the balance of the peasant population. While seed, fertilizer, improved animals, ~~and~~ implements, and seasonal credit are a not ~~unimportant~~ insignificant portion of the total they are a distinct minority partly because of lack of how they could be used and partly because the procedures of the main channel-The Rural Development Bank- are still too tied to the high unit value crop, small number of farmers schemes which are the core of the International Development Association's individually effective, but overall limited national impact, historic lending programme. Provision of services is proceeding more expeditiously-the target dates in the late 1970's for near 100% rural literacy and reasonable access to rural medical centres with education and preventative programmes and the late 1980's or 1990's for 100% access to pure water and to primary education and likely to be met on present trends.

Personnel and knowledge inputs have been inadequate for most Ujamaa Villages in two distinct ways. First the available outside provision has been weak as to numbers and quality. This has been true at all stages from assistance in appropriate site selection and initial crop pattern onward. In part data is simply not available because research until recently has not been directed to basic—much less secondary—food crops nor to management of relatively large productive units using simple technology nor to the applied economics of technical proposals under actual conditions of ~~application~~ implementation. In any event the linkage between research and extension has been low. In part, however, the problem turns on the attitudes of agricultural staff. Their low level of skills and indoctrination in the "progressive farmer" (often more accurately termed enclosing land miser) mythology do not make many of them very enthusiastic supporters of participatory Ujamaa nor do their tendency to urban residence and income levels far above those of the villages ~~make~~ make them entirely acceptable. Decentralization has alleviated these problems where the ongoing retraining programme has been complemented by firm top level regional support for getting extension personnel into villages and working with villagers on a continuing basis but that is by no means universal. At the central Ministry level the problems of outlook which led to the establishment of the separate Ujamaa/Rural Development sections in the Prime Minister's office remain to some extent and are clearly encouraged by at least some "co-operating" foreign aid organizations.

In a different way the provision of skills to villages by training village personnel in first aid, preventative health education, simple bookkeeping and financial planning, farm management, improved traditional construction techniques, agricultural technique demonstration, adult education, etc. has lagged behind needs even though efforts have been increased. The first major breakthrough on the financial front in the 1974 provision of Sh 18 million to the Co-Operative College to begin a regional centre based programme of training one bookkeeper-financial planner from each region. Health and construction training programmes are growing in relevance and numbers trained but the idea that each of 20,000 odd villages will ~~also~~ need to have one or more of its members trained to simple para-professional level in numerous fields by 1980 does not really seem to have been fully comprehended nor any programme adequate to implementing it worked through. However, there are signs the beta village pressure and increased ~~contact~~ contact of personnel working with villages ~~are~~ are leading to more basic rethinking in this field which is admittedly daunting in the problems of training

personnel, syllabuses, followup materials (e.g. tool kits for the building and civil engineering works para professionals, a continued flow of data for health education workers), and -perhaps least- finance.

Resistance to Ujamaa can be overestimated. Many large farmers have become village members with moderate grumbles-the real danger in this area lies if they take over the village committees and make them tools for their own differentiated advancement as they did earlier in many of the co-operative societies with the continuing result that many segments of the co-operative movement are not notably sympathetic to egalitarianism in general or Ujamaa villages in particular. Others have moved to towns and with their friends and relatives in the civil service and parastatal sectors form a rather vocal (especially to foreigners they expect to be sympathetic) anti-Ujamaa lobby. They do soap operas and they do build up doubts among intellectuals and external agencies as well as reinforcing the old progressive farmer mentality where it remains. Feasible resistance in the fields has been nearly nonexistent. (The murder of Dr. Kierra was far from a simple reaction to his promotion of Ujamaa.) Loss of output through passive resistance or loss of expertise has been low-the supposed Ismail maize case is doubtful because the progressive land miners turned over very badly worn soil while in Dedema the one year of good rains since Ujamaa on a large scale there produced all time record cass maize sales.

From mid-1974 a second programme to secure total villageization by mid-1976 has been begun. This does not imply total Ujamaa Villageization by that date-the establishment and expansion of the collective production and distributive component remains voluntary, ^{albeit} discouraged both by exhortation and by ~~discouragement~~ preferential treatment in respect of the provision of capital and recurrent services and credit. The goal is to group rural populations so that communication and social service access become possible; President Nyerere has likened the compulsory aspect here to that in universal primary education in Europe. Again there is far more exhortation, transportation, and assistance in village creation than force although there has been some coercion of unwilling scattered farmers. The speed of the programme is likely to have exacerbated problems of site selection and preparation and it is not evident how service provision can be speeded up adequately to preserve its present momentum in respect of the 30% of the peasant population in Ujamaa villages while also making substantial provision for the 50% expected to be in new non-Ujamaa villages in two years time. Certainly new villagers-including those in early Ujamaa villages-are willing to see phased progress toward facility provision and do not expect vast

inputs at once, but they do expect signs of interest and support and even in the Ujamaa Village programme proper (which has grown far faster than anticipated in 1968-69) one problem has been a tendency to outrun available financial and especially personnel and knowledge input availability.